

I remember vividly the stories my parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles told me of what they faced; how they fled; about the family members murdered; of Churches being burned; and all because they were Christians. Tragically, we are witnessing history repeating itself today in the Middle East.

Violence and instability has once again placed Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East in exceptional peril, a population which has already dwindled considerably in Iraq and Syria.

There is a systematic extermination of the world's oldest Christian communities taking place. First it was Al Qaeda when the U.S. invaded Iraq. Today it is the barbarians of ISIS who are responsible for horrific acts, including torture, murder and displacement of thousands, many with whom I share the same ethnic background.

From the founding of our nation, religious freedom has been a pillar of our democracy and it remains a cornerstone of our democracy and a value we espouse to peoples around the world.

The situation for religious minorities in the Middle East remains particularly desperate and many are losing hope. As a maelstrom of violence and religious persecution ravages this part of the world, we can and must lead.

First, there is a desperate need for humanitarian aid for the displaced inside and outside established refugee camps.

Second, the United States should provide adequate safety for the few remaining religious minority communities in Syria and Iraq.

Third, we should ease the bureaucratic burdens which hold up immigration applications for religious minorities who wish to seek refuge in the United States. Today they are made to wait years due to our tedious refugee processing through the State Department and Department of Homeland Security.

Religious leaders across ecumenical lines have come together and firmly stated their support for religious freedom. Pope Francis said in January, "... Freedom of religion and freedom of expression are both fundamental human rights."

The United States must step up, lead by example, and make good on our belief that religious freedom is a precious one.

TRIBUTE TO RALPH LENTS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 27, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ralph Lents of Greenfield, Iowa for being selected as Adair County's 2015 inductee into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame.

Ralph's 4-H career started off quickly when he joined the Eureka Eagles showing cattle and hogs and participating in livestock judging. His leadership abilities were evident as he served as club treasurer, vice president, and was elected boys county 4-H president in 1968. He enjoyed attending the Adair-Union 4-H Winter Camp at Madrid, the State 4-H Conservation Camp and the State 4-H Conference. Ralph was a member of one of the top livestock judging teams at the Adair County Fair and later coached a team competing at

the American Royal Livestock Show in Kansas City. Ralph received the Danforth leadership award as a senior 4-H'er.

Ralph served three four-year terms on the Adair County Extension Council: four years as chairman, and eight years as treasurer. He served on the Adams County Extension Council for four years, the Iowa Association of County Extension Councils Board of Directors, and represented southwest Iowa on several state Extension Committees. Ralph was club leader of the Way Out Walnuts for eight years, continuing in that role after his daughter, Katie, had graduated. He continues to serve as county fair beef superintendent.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I stand here today and recognize Ralph for his many years of service and dedication. His efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him, and Iowans like him, in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating Ralph for his achievements and wish him nothing but continued success.

TRIBUTE CELEBRATING PIKEVILLE INDEPENDENT'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 27, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Pikeville Independent School District in celebration of 100 years of education and service in the coal-fields of Eastern Kentucky.

Pikeville Independent Schools have attained notable achievements across the board, including accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for Pikeville Elementary and High Schools. The educators in this school system go the extra mile to prepare students for the next level, earning an impressive second place ranking in the state for college and career readiness. Currently, at the high school, 45% of junior and seniors are taking one or more dual credit courses through the University of Pikeville and annual National Merit semi-finalists. Juniors at Pikeville High also consistently rank among Kentucky's top ten districts for ACT composite scores. Not only are individual students succeeding, but the entire student body of each class is raising the bar for achievement. Pikeville High and Junior High Schools have earned recognition as schools of distinction, while also ranking among the top ten in the state for KPREP scores as a district. The founders of this private school district clearly laid firm cornerstones that continue to support the success of its students in its centennial year of education.

Today, every Pikeville Panther has access to new, innovative opportunities like state-of-the-art science labs and online courses, as well as basic support like tutoring and full time teachers for humanities in every school. However, educators are often faced with helping students through far more daunting challenges than tests and essays in the classroom. At Pikeville Independent, students are taught the value of respect and growth in every area of student life, from academics to extra-curricular

activities, thereby inspiring the development of a well-rounded student with a good moral compass. With an average attendance rate surpassing 95%, parents and students clearly understand the importance of education in the new global economy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating 100 years of educational achievement in the heart of coal country. When our students succeed, the future of this great Nation gets much brighter. Congratulations to Pikeville Independent Schools. Go Panthers.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PHILIPP MISSFELDER

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 27, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Philipp Missfelder, a member of the German parliament who passed away unexpectedly on July 13, 2015, after suffering from an apparent pulmonary embolism. We send our prayers and sincerest condolences to his wife, Ann-Christin, and their two daughters.

Born on August 25, 1979, Mr. Missfelder dedicated his life to public service. After receiving a degree in history from the Technical University of Berlin, Mr. Missfelder rooted his commitment to public service in conservative principles. He served as a member of Germany's lower house of parliament, the Bundestag, since 2005 and then became the foreign policy spokesman of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats in 2009.

Mr. Missfelder was a dynamic foreign policy expert and respected leader committed to improving international relations and Germany's transatlantic ties. He garnered a reputation from his colleagues for being a champion of pro-life policy and for his strong support of our common ally, Israel.

When I first met Mr. Missfelder, I was immediately struck by his outgoing and friendly personality, genuine nature, passion for his beliefs, and his desire to serve the citizens of Germany. It was with deep sadness that I learned of his passing.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in commemorating the life of Philipp Missfelder for his public service to Germany, his commitment to democratic values, and the example he set for other public officials around the world.

TRIBUTE TO AARON DEMORY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 27, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Aaron Demory of North Liberty, Iowa, for receiving the 2015 Youth Human Rights Award for his volunteer work in Guatemala.

Each year the Iowa City Human Rights Commission recognizes youth who demonstrate passion and commitment towards bettering society through their service to others with a Youth Human Rights Award.

Aaron Demory was granted this prestigious award for voluntarily traveling to Guatemala to